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Please enter the following comments into the public record for the May 5, 2026, budget study session.

This budget asks Whittier residents to fund more than \$1 million in new one-time Police Department spending and nearly \$4 million in five-year vendor contracts for drones, a surveillance fusion platform, a real-time intelligence center, and an armored vehicle, while telling the Library that \$15,000 for ebooks is a meaningful enhancement and offering nothing new for mental health response, youth programming, or the parks residents actually use every day.

The publicly available compensation data tells a parallel story. Whittier Police Lieutenants and Sergeants routinely earn \$90,000 to \$160,000 in overtime per year. In 2023, a single Sergeant took home more in total cash compensation than the Chief of Police, driven almost entirely by overtime. Sustained overtime at that scale means officers are effectively working two full-time jobs, year after year. From an HR perspective, that is not work-life balance. That is burnout by design associated with higher rates of workers' compensation claims, mental health crises, divorce, substance use, and use-of-force incidents. It is bad for the officers, their families, the residents they encounter on a double shift, and the city's long-term liability exposure. A drone does not fix it. A fusion platform does not fix it. Hiring does. The fact that this budget proposes the former and not the latter says something about whose interests are actually being represented.

Three weeks ago, on April 14, Whittier voters elected James Becerra, Vicky Santana, and Aida Macedo with more than 60 percent of the vote. This budget was prepared before that election and does not reflect what voters asked for.

I think about my daughter when I read this budget. I think about what she will encounter as she grows up in this city.

Will she encounter a drone overhead? Yes, if this budget passes.

Will she encounter a public library with the books and ebooks she wants to read, when she wants to read them? Maybe, if the Council approves a \$15,000 enhancement, the Library is asking for almost apologetically.

Will she encounter a public park with shaded picnic tables, working bathrooms, well-maintained play structures, free youth recreation

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programming, and after-school activities run by the city? That depends entirely on whether the Council decides Parks and Recreation deserves the kind of investment Police is receiving, and the answer in this budget is that it does not.

Will she encounter a mental health crisis response that does not begin with an armed officer? Not in this budget. No such program has been proposed, despite the fact that California cities from Long Beach to Sacramento have implemented these models with measurable success.

Councilmember Macedo's campaign began with former Councilmember Dutra's inaction after she raised concerns about her local park. The lesson of that origin story is not subtle. When residents ask for the basics, a working park, a responsive city, a place their children can grow up safely, and the city responds with surveillance technology and silence, residents organize, and they vote. They just did.

The Council has every member on record as having raised their families in Whittier. I invite each of you to view this budget the way a parent would. Whether your own children would be better served by a drone overhead, or by a library that's open longer, a park that's maintained, a mental health worker who shows up without a gun, and a city that treats its residents' daily lives as the priority.

Whittier is installing the surveillance technology that Mountain View, Santa Cruz, and Denver are removing. Whittier is authorizing five-year AXON contracts whose net cost depends on Santa Fe Springs' reimbursement, which ends in February 2028. Whittier is telling Parks, the Library, and the daily-life departments to make do while the Police Department adds drones, a fusion platform, an intelligence center, and an armored vehicle in a single budget cycle.

That is what is in this budget. That is what residents are being asked to fund. And that is what the voters of this city did not vote for.

Thank you for your time.

Ashley